Human Rights Newsletter

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Commission on Human Rights Holds Forty-sixth Session

The forty-sixth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 29 January to 9 March. The 43-nation Commission, which meets annually, is the principal body of the United Nations concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights.

Under the Chairmanship of Dr. Purificacion Valera-Quisumbing (Philippines), the Commission discussed various human rights questions and examined specific human rights situations, adopting 81 resolutions and 15 decisions towards strengthening the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide.

During the session, there was an active dialogue, debate and exchange of views with State representatives, specialized agencies, and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations. Opening statements were made by the outgoing Chairman, Marc Bossuyt (Belgium), the new Chairman, Dr. Quisumbing, and by the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, Jan Martenson. A record number of high-level government representatives addressed the present session, including the President of Poland, the Second Vice-President of Sudan, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, Ireland, the Netherlands, Austria, Guatemala, the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines and of Hungary and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

REVIEW OF DEBATES

The six-week session of debate reflected the growing interest in the protection of human rights and in the role of the United Nations in this field. The increase in the ratification of international human rights instruments and in the establishment in many parts of the world of national institutions for the promotion of human rights was also seen as an encouraging sign of growth in this area.

General Vojciech Jaruzelski, President of Poland, addressing participants at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. (Photo: Bianco)

The question of *apartheid* and of the occupied territories continued to be priority items on the agenda.

In relation to South Africa, the Commission urged the international community not to relax existing measures aimed at compelling that country to eradicate *apartheid* until there was clear evidence of profound change.

Strongly condemning Israel for its continued occupation of the Palestinian territories, considered to be the main obstacle to their right to self-determination, the Commission reaffirmed its support for the call to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East. Such a conference would be held under United Nations auspices and include the participation of permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A major topic of concern was a request made to the Commission by the United Nations General Assembly to consider a General Assembly resolution calling for ways in which the Commission might improve and enhance its work. However, unable to arrive at a consensus, the Commission decided to establish a sessional working group at its next session in order to formulate rec-

ommendations which would then be submitted to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

Under several agenda items, resolutions and decisions were adopted concerning the situations in specific countries. In particular, under *agenda item 12*, which dealt with the question of the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories, the following countries were referred to:

● *AFGHANISTAN* The Commission called upon all parties concerned to work for the urgent achievement of a comprehensive political solution and the creation of the necessary conditions of peace and normalcy which would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homeland in safety and honour.

● *ALBANIA* The Government was called upon to provide information on the concrete manner in which constitutional and legal measures comply with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to respond to the specific allegations transmitted to the Commission by its Special Rapporteur on the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

● *CHILE* The Government-elect was requested to report, at a special meeting at the forty-seventh session, on the follow-up to the recommendations adopted by the United Nations up to 11 March 1990 in connection with the restoration in Chile of the human rights and fundamental freedoms with which it has been able to deal.

● *CUBA* The Government was called upon to honour its repeated guarantees to the representatives of the Commission who had visited Cuba in 1988, that individuals who had attempted to present information to those representatives would not be subject to reprisals, detention, or negative consequences of any nature whatsoever. It was also requested to respond to the unanswered questions put to the Cuban authorities by representatives at the next Commission session.

● *EL SALVADOR* The Commission expressed its serious concern over the increase in the number of grave, politically motivated violations of human rights such as summary executions, torture and abductions, and at the persistence of enforced disappearances. It strongly appealed to the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacin Nacional to use the good offices of the United Nations Secretary-General to endeavour to achieve, as rapidly as possible, a negotiated political solution to the armed conflict that will encourage the existence and strengthening of a democratic, pluralist and participatory process involving the promotion and respect of the human rights of the Salvadorian people.

● *ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN* The Commission welcomed the decision of the Government to invite the Commission's Special Representative to visit that country and encouraged the Government to comply with international instruments on human rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction enjoy the rights recognized in these instruments.

● *ROMANIA* The Commission, convinced that the continued services of the Special Rapporteur will be of benefit to the Government and people of Romania during the present period of transition towards full respect for human rights in that country, decided to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for a further year.

● *SOUTHERN LEBANON* The Commission condemned the continued Israeli violations of human rights in southern Lebanon. It called upon Israel to put an immediate end to such practices and to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council which require the immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Lebanese territory and respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

Although a draft resolution on China and a draft decision on Iraq was submitted, no decisions were taken.

Regarding Haiti, the Chairman of the Commission was requested to appoint an independent expert to examine developments in the human rights situation in this country.

Concerning Guatemala, the Commission also requested the Secretary-General to appoint an independent expert as his representative to examine the human rights situation in that country. However, it decided to consider this matter at its forty-seventh session under an item of the agenda to be determined.

The Commission also decided to discontinue the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Chile.

Human rights situations in some countries were discussed in closed session in order to consider confidential communications, with the participation of the 43 member States of the Commission. This procedure is used when there is allegedly a consistent pattern of grave human rights violations. The following countries were subject to review: Brunei Darussalam, Haiti, Myanmar, Paraguay and Somalia. The Chairman announced that the Commission had decided to discontinue consideration, in closed session, of human rights situations in Brunei Darussalam, Haiti and Paraguay.

RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS

The Commission reviewed reports by the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances and special rapporteurs dealing with summary and arbitrary executions, torture, religious intolerance and mercenaries. Among the resolutions adopted, particularly concerning summary or arbitrary executions, the Commission encouraged Governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to set up training programmes and to support projects with a view to training or educating law enforcement officers in human rights issues. The mandates of the special rapporteurs dealing with these thematic situations were also renewed.

Among the various subjects which had been dealt with by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and referred to the Commission were: the administration of justice; the question of minorities and indigenous peoples; migrant workers, the effective functioning of treaty bodies; discrimination against HIV-infected people or people with

AIDS; the rights of the child; the right to development; and the protection of mentally-ill persons.

Concerning the administration of justice, the Commission stressed the important role that non-governmental organizations, particularly professional associations of lawyers and judges, can play in promoting human rights in this field. It expressed its support for providing States, upon their request, with assistance in this area, especially within the United Nations programme of advisory services and technical assistance.

On the question of minorities, the Commission provisionally adopted a draft declaration prepared by an open-ended working group, on the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. A decision was also adopted to recommend to ECOSOC that the General Assembly proclaim an International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples, in 1993 or in another appropriate year.

In a resolution on discrimination against HIV-infected people or people with AIDS, the Commission endorsed the appointment by the Sub-Commission of Luis Varela Quirós to undertake a study of problems and causes of discrimination against affected people to be taken up by ECOSOC for adoption.

ADVISORY SERVICES

The Commission appealed to all Governments to consider making use of the United Nations programme of advisory services and technical assistance and to avail themselves of the information and/or training courses offered at the national level for appropriate Goverment personnel on the application of international human rights standards. It welcomed the increasing number of such requests in this field.

In relation to the Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the field of human rights, the Commission called upon all Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals to consider making voluntary contributions for the implementation of projects within this programme.

Under a resolution on development of public information activities in the field of human rights, including the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, the Commission reaffirmed the need for information materials on human rights to be carefully designed in clear and accessible form, to be tailored to regional and national requirements with specific target audiences in mind and to be effectively disseminated in national and local languages in sufficient volume to have the desired impact. Effective use should be made of the mass media, in particular radio and television and audio-visual technologies, in order to reach a wider audience, with priority being given to children, other young people and the disadvantaged, including those in isolated areas.

WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Among the many decisions adopted by the Commission was support for a General Assembly resolution to pursue the holding of a World Conference on Human Rights. The purpose of such a conference would be to deal, at the highest level, with the crucial questions facing the United Nations in connection with the promotion and protection of human rights and to formulate a programme of action.

ROLE OF NGOS

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have always played an active role at meetings of the Commission. During the forty-sixth session, 115 NGOs were represented by some 630 individuals, with a wide spectrum of interests and expertise.

Of the 285 statements given by NGOs, attention was mainly focused on the question of the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world, the question of detention and imprisonment, and the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Some NGOs endorsed the need for worldwide education on human rights, particularly in the areas of identification of the causes of conflict leading to human rights violations and the methodology used to seek fair and just solutions. It was suggested that the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1998, be an appropriate focus for such an education programme.

For further information, contact: External Relations, Publications and Documentation Section, Centre for Human Rights.

Interview: Women and Human Rights

Dr. Purificacion Valera-Quisumbing (Philippines) is Chairman of the forty-sixth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. An Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Dr. Quisumbing has also served as Convenor of the Group of Experts on Law, Policy and Action for Women's Rights for the National Commission on Women, prepared handbooks on women's rights for use by non-lawyers and school children, acted as a consultant for several women's organizations, and written articles on women and the law. "The Human Rights Newsletter" (HRN) spoke recently with Dr. Quisumbing on the subject of women and human rights:

HRN: As only the third woman to hold the position of Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights over a 46-year period, do you think this honour is due to your record in the field of human rights?

Dr. Quisumbing: Yes, very definitely. It also has to do with the politics of electing a chairman for that position. I have been working in the area of human rights as an academic, as a lawyer, and to some extent, as a mother and wife. I have, however, just joined my Government's service.

I was for a long time a university teacher and researcher. I have published and edited books and articles on human rights. This background gives me the preparation, the qualifications and the courage to accept the position of Chairman. I suppose the Asian Group endorsed my nomination largely on the basis of this experience. The chairmanship of the Commission rotates on a regional basis and this year, 1990, was Asia's turn. My position in the Department of Foreign Affairs is new, that is, the position of Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. The office was created only in September 1988 by President Aquino as part of her strong commitment and programme to promote respect for, and protection of, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

HRN: In your opinion, what will be the most significant accomplishment of this Commission session concerning the advancement of human rights for women?

Dr. Quisumbing: Let me first speak about human rights in general, because anything that we accomplish in this area, of course, affects women's rights. The forty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights adopted 81 resolutions of which 60 resolutions and ten decisions were adopted by consensus, that is, with general agreement and therefore universal support. Some of these resolutions indeed affect women's issues. To cite one, there was a resolution on measures to improve the situation and ensure the human rights and dignity of all migrant workers. From the experience in my own coutnry, a great number of Filipino migrant workers are women. Reports show that these women are the most vulnerable, the most victimized in foreign cultures. There are all too many appalling instances of women who are maltreated, enslaved, exploited, raped, induced or forced into prostitution or are victims of different forms of sexual harassment and indignities. I am very pleased that the Commission has been voicing a continuing concern against slavery and slavery-like practices in contemporary societies.

Of special interest to women are the resolutions on the protection of children's rights, such as the very important resolution that calls on the Commission Chairman to appoint a special rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, including the problem of the adoption of children for commercial purposes. Detention, torture, and other inhuman treatment of children in South Africa is the subject of yet another resolution.

Women's rights will be further advanced with the adoption of resolutions on rights against torture and discrimination of all kinds, rights to development, rights of minorities and indigenous populations, discrimination against people with AIDS, rights in times of armed conflict, and human rights in relation to the environment and extreme poverty.

HRN: From a practical point of view, what can a woman do in her day-to-day life to realize her human rights without having to depend upon such things as government legislation, lawyers, bosses, and company structures?

Dr. Quisumbing: Let me put my answer in a personal context. I am one of two daughters and also mother to two daughters. I am wife to a busy lawyer and government official. As daughter, mother and wife, I firmly believe a woman's most effective human rights protection is education. I tell my children, as my parents taught me, that the best gift I can ever give them is a good education. Knowledge strengthens one's human dignity; education is empowerment. Human rights education for all will lead to a universal culture of human rights and women are in the best position to foster and propagate this. The woman bears the children, rears and educates them. She is in a pivotal position to carry the human rights message, from the womb to the tomb, even only by her example. Women, who are now taking leadership positions, including as heads of state, can change the human rights scene for the better.

HRN: Any activity of the United Nations to promote and protect human rights depends on the ability of the organization to function properly. Do you feel that United Nations action in this area should be strengthened and if so, do you find that the present resources are sufficient in order to achieve such important goals?

Dr. Quisumbing: In the Charter of the United Nations, human rights and peace are inter-linked objectives. The United Nations has been putting much of its resources into pursuing international peace through activities on disarmament, peacekeeping forces, etc. Of course, these are very costly in terms of money and resources. You can dismantle the military hardware, but unless you can dismantle the violence in the hearts and minds of people, the dismantling of the hardware and armaments will not lead to a durable and just peace. The utilization of United Nations resources for security and peace-keeping activities must be balanced by giving also enough resources to programmes on human rights, human development, and international efforts toward restructuring social and economic institutions. To this end, the United Nations General Assembly has mandated the Commission to submit recommendations to the Economic and Social Council on ways and means to improve the Commission's work. More resources would go a long way.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day was celebrated on 8 March 1990 on the theme, *Women and the Environment.*

In a special message from United Nations headquarters in New York, the Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar, noted that 101 countries have now ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The United Nations' monitoring of action taken by States parties to the Convention, he said, has contributed to a re-examination of traditional atti-

tudes and practices, while at the same time addressing new challenges to the status and role of women in society.

At the Palais des Nations (United Nations), Geneva, Switzerland, commemorative activities were organized by the Group on Equal Rights for Women. Both Dr. Valera-Purificacion Quisumbing, Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, addressed participants.

Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights Meets

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights held its fourth session from 15 January to 2 February 1990 at the Palais des Nations (United Nations), Geneva, Switzerland.

The 18-member Committee was established in 1985 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Its main function is to examine reports submitted to it by States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on measures adopted and progress made in observing the rights contained in the Covenant. Under the provision of this Covenant, each State party agrees to do everything possible, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, to attain progressively the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights for all.

During the three-week session, the Committee considered reports submitted by Argentina, Colombia, Cyprus, India, Jamaica, Mexico and the Philippines.

On the basis of this review, the Committee adopted a number of observations and recommendations of a general nature for submission to ECOSOC, concerning its future methods of work. The Committee also adopted two draft decisions, recommended for adoption by ECOSOC; a general comment on international technical assistance measures; and began its consideration of the draft general guidelines for reporting by States parties.

At this time, a proposal was made that the pre-sessional working group, which had been meeting five days prior to the session, be allowed to meet one to three months beforehand. This would better enable the Committee to improve the efficiency of the system and to facilitate the task of States representatives by providing advance notice of the principal issues which might arise in the examination of reports.

States parties which were experiencing difficulties of a technical nature in preparing their report were encouraged to request expert assistance for that purpose from the Centre for Human Rights.

NEW REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

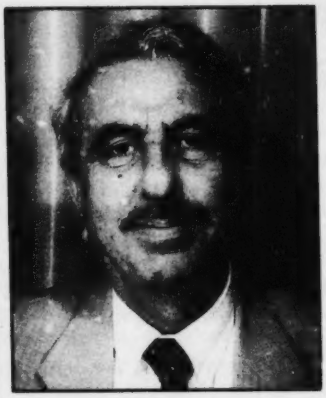
A revised schedule for reporting by States parties to the Covenant in accordance with new periodicity arrangements was approved. This method of reporting is aimed at facilitating the task of both States parties and the Committee with respect to reporting and at enhancing the effectiveness of the overall monitoring system. States parties will submit a single report within two years of entry into force of the Covenant and thereafter at five-year intervals. Special arrangements will be made to ensure a smooth transition from the old to the new methods of reporting.

ECOSOC REVIEW

During ECOSOC's first regular session to be held from 1 to 25 May 1990, a review will be made, for the first time since the establishment of the Committee, of the Committee's composition, organization and administrative arrangements. ECOSOC may also take action on two draft decisions, one concerning the Committee's provisional rules of procedure and the other regarding the timing of meetings of the Committee's pre-sessional working group.

The fifth Committee session is planned for 26 November to 14 December 1990 in Geneva, Switzerland.

For further information, contact: International Instruments Section, Centre for Human Rights.



The Centre for Human Rigths is sad to announce the death of Munzer Fayek Anabtawi on 1 February 1990.

Mr. Anabtawi's 13-year career with the Centre began in 1977 as the first secretary of the newly-established Human Rights Committee. In 1984, he moved from the International Instruments Section to become Chief of the Advisory Services unit where he was responsible for the coordination of programme activities such as fellowships, seminars, workshops and training courses.

Before his retirement in August 1989, Mr. Anabtawi played an active role in the establishment of the Arab Institute for Human Rights, located in Tunis, Tunisia. The Institute has dedicated its first human rights training course and its library to the memory of Mr. Anabtawi. In addition, it will be compiling a book on all of his published works produced over the years.

Speaking before participants at the Institute's training course, held in Tunis from 12 to 18 March 1990, Jan Martenson, Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, paid tribute to Mr. Anabtawi's many years of dedication to the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly in the Arab world.

Human Rights Project in Paraguay

At the request of the Government of Paraguay, the Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP/Paraguay) are cooperating closely on a project designed to provide technical assistance and advisory services in the field of human rights.

The Government has committed itself to defraying local costs for the establishment and functioning of the Office of the Sub-division for Human Rights in the Ministry of Justice and Labour and for project activities. The Centre for Human Rights and UNDP are providing consultants, lecturers, fellowships and relevant documentation.

The project includes three major objectives:

- Implementation of a plan which will incorporate international human rights standards into the Paraguayan legal system, so that their application on a nationwide basis can be supervised and coordinated and the necessary information can be channelled to the human rights bodies of the United Nations and the Organization of American States and to non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights;

- Adoption of measures to establish a National Human Rights Commission which will include representatives of public bodies and non-governmental organizations responsible for advising on policies for the promotion and protection of human rights and the identification of programmes for the most vulnerable population groups; and

- To include in the new Constitution of Paraguay the establishment of an independent institution responsible for the protection of human rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Paraguay, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties to which Paraguay has acceded.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED

Among the activities to be organized will be a national workshop/training course on human rights to be held during the course of 1990. Eminent decision-making persons, police, prison officials, lawyers, judges and officials from the Ministries of Justice, Health, Education, Defence and the Interior, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations will be invited to attend.

For further information, contact: Advisory Services and Technical Assistance Section, Centre for Human Rights.

Workshop/Training Courses Planned

Two upcoming events will be organized by the Centre for Human Rights in the context of the United Nations advisory services and technical assistance programme. They include an Asian/Pacific workshop on international human rights issues to be held in Manila, the Philippines, from 7 to 11 May 1990, and the first Uruguayan national training course on the application of human rights instruments and the administration of justice, to be held in Montevideo, from 9 to 13 July 1990. A third workshop on the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to be organized within the framework of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, will be held in Ottawa, Canada, from 17 to 20 June 1990.

ASIAN/PACIFIC WORKSHOP

Organized in cooperation with the Government of the Philippines, this workshop is intended to bring together a high-level group of senior Government officials and experts in the field of human rights from various parts of the world as well as representatives of Governments from the Asian/Pacific region. Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council are also invited.

The workshop aims to review such issues as: standard-setting in the field of human rights; the role and machinery of the United Nations in the field of human rights; national and regional institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms; awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms: the role of public opinion; legislation, implementation and information functions; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

WORKSHOP ON THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Organized in cooperation with the Government of Canada, the workshop is designed to provide an exchange of views between a representative group of members (or former members) of the United Nations Human Rights Committee and senior representatives of Governments from Eastern and Western Europe, North America, Japan, New Zealand and Australia dealing with human rights questions and, where appropriate, the implementation of States' obligations under the Covenant, particularly, the handling of communications under the Optional Protocol.

The focus of the workshop will be on the practice and procedure of the United Nations Human Rights Committee under the Optional Protocol and substantive rights enshrined in the Covenant. It will also assess, in a comparative fashion, proceedings under analogous international human rights instruments, including the European Convention on Human Rights.

URUGUAYAN TRAINING COURSE

Organized in cooperation with the Government of Uruguay, the training course will bring together administrators of justice such as police, prison officials, judges and justice officials, and officials of the Ministry of External Relations of Uruguay, with a view to: building awareness of all persons involved in the promotion and protection of human rights of the application and obligations deriving from international human rights

instruments; and adopting guidelines for the national campaign to promote public awareness of human rights. The request of the Government of Uruguay to organize this event emanates from, and is a follow-up to, the 1987 visit to Uruguay of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture. At this time, top Government aides expressed their interest in receiving technical assistance in the field of human rights. The authorities will use the training course to set up national follow-up groups responsible for the national campaign to promote human rights.

For further information, contact: Advisory Services and Technical Assistance Section, Centre for Human Rights.

Human Rights Exhibitions

Three exhibitions were sponsored by the Centre for Human Rights between October 1989 and April 1990. At the opening of each exhibition an address was made by the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights. They include:

● *ART OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA* (30 January to 2 March 1990) Organized by the Australian Government to coincide with the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights and to create public awareness of the current revival of the rights of aboriginal people, recovering ownership of their land and of their individual and collective dignity. A wide selection of art by aboriginal artists was displayed including traditional paintings on sheets of bark, acrylic paintings on canvas, batik and photographs of traditional rock art.

● *RESPECTER L'HOMME EN TEMPS DE GUERRE* (14 February to 8 March 1990) Organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross to coincide with the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights and to mark the 125th anniversary of the Geneva Convention of 1864. The exhibition aimed to show how conflict situations and wars have made it necessary to develop appropriate legal instruments, and how the law has evolved to take into greater account the implications of modern warfare.

● *AUSCHWITZ: CRIMES AGAINST MANKIND* (19 March to 9 April) Organized by the International Auschwitz Committee to portray the history of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in Poland. The exhibit displayed through photographs, documents, sculptures and drawings the camp's history from 1940 to its liberation in 1945. Scenes of gas chambers, slave labour and hunger beatings were among the many topics covered.

Right to Development Proposals

A series of proposals for action by States, the international community and non-governmental organizations emerged from a Global Consultation on the Right to Development as a Human Right held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8 to 12 January 1990 (see corresponding article, *Human Rights Newsletter,* Vol.3, No.1).

The meeting was organized by the Centre for Human Rights and brought together academics, non-governmental organizations, specialized agencies and various human rights and development professionals.

A series of proposals and recommendations were submitted to the Commission on Human Rights in time for its forty-sixth session.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

Among the proposals made to the United Nations and the international community were:

● The United Nations should take the lead in implementing the Declaration on the Right to Development, setting up mechanisms for ensuring the compatibility of all United Nations activities and programmes with the Declaration;

The Hunter — A linocut by aboriginal artist Robert Campbell Jr., member of the Ngaku people, Australia.

● Implementation of the Declaration should be coordinated by the Centre for Human Rights. To be effective, this must include permanant liaison with the office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation in New York, regular representation in the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination, and establishment of focal points for the right to development and human rights in each development-related United Nations programme and agency;

● The United Nations should launch a world campaign for human rights through development education with a particular emphasis on the different organizations working in these fields at the community and regional levels;

● All States should take immediate steps to ensure that national policy and development plans contain explicit provisions on the right to development and the realization of all human rights; and

● Participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at all levels of the United Nations system should be guaranteed since such organizations are the real constituencies of human rights. NGOs should set up a permanent coordinating committee for all their activities and play a leading role in the dissemination of information about human rights, including the right to development.

Copies of the report (E/CN.4/1990/9) and further information are available from: External Relations, Publications and Documentation Section, Centre for Human Rights.

New UN Stamp Series on AIDS

The United Nations Postal Administration has launched a new set of six commemorative stamps on the theme *Fight AIDS Worldwide.* It is hoped that the series will contribute to a greater worldwide awareness of the problems faced by people with acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and the preventive measures that can be taken against the disease.

United Nations bodies, such as the Centre for Human Rights, are working closely with the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS to address the human rights dimension in response to this problem. At the forty-first session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (7 August to 1 September 1989), a decision was taken to entrust Luis Varela-Quirós with a study on problems of discrimination against HIV-infected people or people with AIDS. The study will be submitted in preliminary form to the Sub-Commission at its next session.

Stamp denominations will be in Swiss francs 0.50 and 0.80, US dollars 0.25 and 0.40, and Australian schillings 5.– and 11.–.

For further information, contact: United Nations Postal Administration, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria; or United Nations Headquarters, New York, N.Y. 10017, USA.

International Literacy Year

International Literacy Year 1990, the global campaign to reduce the number of illiterates, was launched on 6 December 1989 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In an address delivered at the ceremony, United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said that illiteracy was a major concern of the United Nations because, for nearly one thousand million women and men – the illiterate adults of the world – the right to education, proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is not yet a reality. Illiteracy is a serious obstacle to effective participation in society. The goal of the Year is to put this message across in order that we may pursue with renewed commitment and replenished resources the immense task of making education-for-all a reality.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is the lead agency organizing the event.

UN/NGO Symposium on Palestine

A United Nations/non-governmental organization symposium on Palestine was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 5 to 7 February 1990. At this time, a United Nations seminar was also being held on the same subject. The symposium concluded with a 34-point declaration calling for the mobilization in the Latin American and Caribbean region of public support for the Palestine struggle for self-determination.

NGO DECLARATION

In their declaration, the NGOs state their support for the inalienable

rights of the Palestinian people and their independence struggle and call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, as envisaged in United Nations resolutions.

Concern was also expressed over the lack of information available in the region with regard to the question of Palestine. Participants felt that the formation of a Latin American regional NGO committee on this question would be a significant step for mobilizing public opinion in support of the Palestinian cause. To this end, a ten-organization interim Coordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine for NGOs in the Latin American and Caribbean region was established.

For further information, contact: United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, United Nations Headquarters, New York, N.Y. 10017, USA.

Centre/ICJ India Seminar

The Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers of the International Commission of Jurists organized, in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, a seminar on the Independence of the Judiciary in India in New Delhi on 20 to 21 January 1990. Seminars of this kind are part of a series which take place regularly on this subject.

Opening statements were made by the Prime Minister of India as well as by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Minister of Law. The Attorney General, the Solicitor General and several Justices of the Supreme Court also addressed the seminar and participated in its deliberations together with 20 Chief Justices and Justices of the Indian High Courts and Justices of the Supreme Courts of Bangladesh, Mauritius and Pakistan.

Following the two days of plenary sessions, participants agreed on a short statement regarding steps to be taken to preserve the independence of the judiciary in India. They unanimously approved of and endorsed the Bangalore Principles on the Domestic Application of International Human Rights Norms adopted by the Chief Justices and Judges of Commonwealth countries of the South Asian and South East Asian Region. It was also unanimously agreed that these principles recognized that international human rights instruments provide important guidelines in cases concerning fundamental rights and that they should be incorporated in the domestic jurisprudence by judges adopting a goal-oriented approach.

For further information, contact: International Commisssion of Jurists, P.O. Box 120, 1224 Chêne-Bougeries, Geneva, Switzerland, or the Centre for Human Rights.

Human Rights for the Poorest

The 12th annual meeting of the NGO Fourth World Committee was held at the Palais des Nations (United Nations), Geneva, Switzerland, on 1 February 1990. The theme of the meeting was *Restitute Human Rights to the Poorest.* Statements were made by Alwine de Vos van Steenwijk, President of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, Albert Tévoèdjré, Director of the Pan-African Social Prospects Centre, and Jan Martenson, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights.

During the discussions, participants agreed that the international community must do everything possible to devise policies to eliminate extreme poverty. Policies which were not formulated in cooperation with the poorest themselves could not guarantee fundamental rights to all. In a Common Declaration, the participants gave their full support to the Wresinski Report of the French Economic and Social Council entitled, *Extreme Poverty and Economic and Social Insecurity,* as offering realistic and feasible propositions for the implementation of coherant and prospective strategies for the fight against poverty.

REQUEST TO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

One of the decisions taken by the participants was to recommend to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to make a request to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorites to prepare a study on the indivisibility of human rights, emanating from the peoples living in conditions of extreme poverty, in order to develop effective measures that will ensure them the enjoyment of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Further to this request, the Commission on Human Rights, at its forty-sixth session, adopted a resolution that the question of extreme poverty and exclusion from society should be studied in greater depth and that the Sub-Commission should carry out a specific study of this question.

For further information, contact: International Movement ATD Fourth World, Secrétariat général, 107, avenue du Général Leclerc, 95480 Pierrelaye, France.

World Information Service

In May 1989, international communication experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) met in Geneva to develop a New Computerized World Information Service (NCWIS). The purpose of the service, a major project of the World Information Clearing Centre (WICC), is to facilitate, create, and/or perfect worldwide dissemination of information and exchange of information on global problems to the non-governmental sector. This is done by combining computer link-ups with telex, telefax or even mail, in the event that no other form of communication is available. A major feature of the service is to ensure that all information is transmitted in an easy-to-understand and concise manner, especially items of a technical or scientific nature.

A network of WICC branches is now expanding in different regions of the world, utilizinig the NCWIS service to promote new attitudes of information sharing on such issues as human rights, peace, disarmament, development and the environment.

WICC's headquarters in Geneva offers assistance to NGOs, of all

social and professional profiles, including training, networking, technical and organizational advice and equipment selection, in order to improve their communication capacities.

COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

In addition to NGOs, one of the main sources of information for the NCWIS is the United Nations and its specialized agencies, such as the Centre for Human Rights, the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization, the United Nations Childrens' Fund, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Department of Public Information and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Concerning cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights, WICC plans to transmit on a regular basis messages specifically related to the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights. The first message, sent in July 1989, was from the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, soliciting the close cooperation and support of NGOs in this endeavour. A symposium on Modern Information Technology in the Service of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, to be held in cooperation with the Centre and other interested United Nations agencies, is also under consideration for 1990.

HOST ORGANIZATIONS NEEDED

To develop the NCWIS, regional branches of WICC are being established in different regions of the world. In turn, those organizations willing to host a WICC centre are actively being sought.

For further information: Sally Curry, World Information Clearing Centre, P.O.B. 58, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Tel: 798.51.62; Fax: 791.00.34; Telex: 428 200 txc ch.

New Zealand Human Rights Commissioner

Margaret Mulgan has succeeded Justice John Wallace as New Zealand's Chief Human Rights Commissioner. Ms. Mulgan is the first woman to serve in this post since the Commission was created in 1979. She is a graduate of the Univeersities of Auckland and Otago in New Zealand, and of University College, London, and has been a visiting scholar at St. John's College, Oxford and at the University of Michigan Law School (USA). Commenting on her new appointment, Ms. Mulgan, a senior lecturer in law at the University of Otago, Dunedin, said that human rights issues had led her to studying law, and thst law had now taken her back to human rights.

Lawyers for Human Rights

The National Directorate of Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) was established in Pretoria, South Africa in 1986. Major objectives include the promotion of human rights education and awareness, the provision of legal and quasi-legal assistance to the victims of human rights abuses, and conducting of rigorous campaigns, lobbying, and representations for the recognition, protection and enfercement of fundamental human rights.

According to LHR, there is no public defender programme in South Africa. Approximately 85 per cent of criminal cases are unrepresented. The vast majority of those cases consist of accused blacks who have no understanding of the South African legal system.

In order to help address this problem, LHR established a National Pro Bono Legal services scheme. In this way, lawyers are invited to dovoluntary legal work in cases where the State is a party which would by definition include criminal cases. The human rights issue being adddressed is the right to legal representation in order to have a fair trial.

At present, members of LHR attend the United Nations Human Rights Commission's *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Experts on Southern Africa.

Further information: Brian N. Currin, National Directorate of Lawyers for Human Rights, 713 Van Erkom Bldg., PRetorius St., Pretoria 0002, South Africa; Tel: (012) 21 2135; Fax: (012) 325 6318.

New Child Rights Association

A committee of the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Troyes, France, has announced the creation of an association to be known as the Fête des Droits de l'Enfant. The purpose of the association will be to encourage worldwide celebrations each year on 20 November to promote child rights.

In addition, the association claims that a proposal has been sent to the United Nations Secretary-General to designate this day as the *Fête Universelle des Droits de l'Enfant* in commemoration of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1959.

For further information: Jean-Marie Boyer, La Jeune Chambre Economique de Troyes, La Fête des Droits de l'Enfant, B.P. 4001-10013, Troyes Cedex, France.

INFORMATION UPDATE

Is your organization planning events, preparing special materials, and/or cooperating with others on behalf of the United Nations World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights? If so, the Centre would like to hear more about it. Please send to: *Human Rights Newsletter*, External Relations, Publication and Documentation Section, Centre for Human Rights.

UN/IGO Events 1990

26 February-9 March Commission on the Status of Women. Venue: Vienna, Austria. Contact: United Nations Office at Vienna, Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria.

12 March Second meeting of intergovernmental organizations and United Nations specialized agencies in connection with technical assistance and the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights. Contact: External Relations, Publications and Documentation Section, Centre for Human Rights.

12-16 March Meetings on AIDS and Human Rights. Venue: Brazzaville, People's Republic of the Congo. Contact: World Health Organization, 20, Avenue Appia, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland.

19 March-6 April Human Rights Committee, 38th session. Venue: New York, NY, USA. Contact: International Instruments Section, Centre for Human Rights.

21 March International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

23 April-4 May Committee against Torture, 4th session. Venue: Geneva, Switzerland. Contact: International Instruments Section, Centre for Human Rights.

1-25 May First session of the Economic and Social Council. Venue: New York, NY, USA.

7-11 May Meeting of Experts on Alternative Ways to Mark the End of the United Nations Decade on Disabled Persons. Venue: Helsinki, Finland. Contact: Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Vienna International Centre, A-1400, Vienna, Austria.

30 May-3 June Seventh International Colloquy on the European Convention on Human Rights. Venue: Copenhagen, Denmark, Oslo, Norway, and Lund, Sweden. Contact: Council of Europe, BP 431 R6, F67006 Strasbourg, France.

NGO Events 1990

NGOs are encouraged to provide information on their activities to the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva. It is understood, however, that the Centre does not assume any responsibility for the views expressed by participants in NGO events noted in the Newsletter.

12-18 March First training course of the Arab Institute for Human Rights on the protection and promotion of human rights. Venue: Tunis, Tunisia. Contact: Arab Institute for Human Rights, P.O. Box 306, Belvedere, Tunis, Tunisia.

2-4 April Seminar on Human Rights, Humanitarian Law and Refugee Law. Venue: Lund, Sweden. Contact: Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Department of Law, P.O. Box 1165, S-22105 Lund, Sweden.

21-23 April Second International Conference on Human Rights of the Hanns-Seidel Foundation. Venue: Rome, Italy. Contact: Institute for Foreign Affairs, Hanns-Seidel Foundation, Lazarettstrasse 33, 8000 Munich 19, Federal Republic of Germany.

14-18 May Seminario Latino-Americano para Funcionarios Responsables de los Sistemas Penitenciarios y Centros de Detencin. Venue: San José, Costa Rica. Contact: Institut Henry-Dunant, 114, rue de Lausanne, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland.

June NGO parallel activities (human rights seminars, workshops and cultural arrangements) to the Conference on the Human Dimension (Helsinki Process). Contact: Secretariat for the CSCE/CHD – Parallel Activities. Studiestraede 38, 2, 1455 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

9-12 August Sixth General Conference of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Venue: Tromsö, Norway. Contact: Sámiráddi, Nordic Sámi Council, SF-99980 Ohcéjohka, Finland.

New Publications

The Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Fact Sheet No. 9; and Study Series 2 on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Conviction (available in all six United Nations languages). Gratis. Contact: Centre for Human Rights.

Introducing Refugee Issues into the United Nations Human Rights Agenda. By Roberta Cohen. January 1990. 34 pp. A report of the Refugee Policy Group, proposing steps to advance refugee issues at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and other UN bodies. It advocates better defence by the United Nations of the rights of refugees and greater international exposure to the human rights problems refugees and asylum-seekers face. Contact: Roberta Cohen, Senior Advisor for Human Rights, Refugee Policy Group, 1424 16th Street, NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20036, USA.

Toward the Rule of Law: Soviet Legal Reform and Human Rights Under Perestroika. A Helsinki Watch Report. December 1989. 182 pp. Contact: Human Rights Watch, 485 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA.

The Status of Academic Freedom and Human Rights of Palestinian Higher Education in the Occupied Territories (Extracts). Prepared by Penny Johnson and Mark Taylor, Birzeit University. December 1989. 10 pp. Contact: World University Service, 5, chemin des Iris, 1216 Geneva (Cointrin), Switzerland.

Human Rights in Today's Hungary. Edited by Márta Katona Soltész. March 1990. 400 pp. ISBN 9630277824. DM 108,-. Contact: PALLAS Gmbh, Friedrich-Haendelstr. 2, D-8552 H°chstadt/Aisch, Federal Republic of Germany.

Women, Mothers, Children and the Global AIDS Strategy. By Jonathan M. Mann. WHO/GPA/DIR/89.11. An address presented on 27 November 1989 at the International Conference on the Implications of AIDS for Mothers and Children. Paris, France. Contact: World Health Organization, 20 Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.

Una vocazione delle Nazioni Unite: La causa dei diritti dell'uomo. October 1989. 228 pp. Italian. Commentary on the work of the United Nations in the field of human rights and how it deals with the various human rights issues (declarations, instruments). Contact: Arti Grafiche Fratelli Palombi, Via dei Gracchi, 181 187, Italy.

World Directory of Minorities. Edited by the Minority Rights Group. 1989. Contact: Minority Rights Group, 29 Craven Street, London WC2N 5NT, United Kingdom.

Le noyau intangible des droits de l'homme. Documents préparatoires au septième colloque interdisciplinaire, 23-25 novembre 1989. No. 3. 36 pp. French. Contact: Centre interdisciplinaire d'éthique et des droits de l'homme, CP 77, 1700 Fribourg, Switzerland.

Sexual Exploitation of Children in Developing Countries. By Ove Narvesen. ISBN 82-7481-003-1, 1989. 76 pp. Investigations carried out in close cooperation with several voluntary agencies. Contact: Redd Barna, Grensesvingen 7, N-0602 Oslo 6, Norway.

La protection des journalistes en mission périlleuse dans les zones de conflit armé. By Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe. ISBN 2-8027-0426-5, 1989. 432 pp. FF 400. French. Contact: Editeurs, Etablissements Emile Bruylant S.A., Rue de la Régence 67, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

Transnational Perspectives. Vol. 15, No. 2, 1989. Issue devoted to international law and the United Nations. Contact: Transnational Perspectives, Case postale 161, 1211 Geneva 16, Switzerland.

Human Rights Education: The Fourth R. Bulletin prepared by Amnesty International USA's National Steering Committee on Human Rights Education and Human Rights Internet Reporter. Subscriptions: AIUSA, Educator' Network, 644 Sutter Street, San Francisco, California 94102, USA. Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1989, focus on the rights of children. Spring issue focus on capital punishment.

Child Rights Festivities

On 22 March 1990, some 1,000 children in Geneva, Switzerland (aged 7 to 12), participated in human rights-oriented games and activities aimed at sensitizing them to their rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Organized by a coordinating group known as Droits de l'enfant, the celebrations also served as an opportunity to encourage the Government of Switzerland to become a signatory to the Convention. As of 26 January 1990, 61 States had already done so.

A visit was also made to the Palais des Nations to see a film of the work done by the United Nations and to view the progress of tulip bulbs planted on 20 November 1989 by Genevese primary students in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

As part of the Child Rights day festivities, children visited the Palais des Nations (United Nations), Geneva, Switzerland, to view the rows of tulips planted in November 1989 commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and to see slides on the work of the United Nations.

The Centre for Human Rights is the lead agency of the United Nations in the field of human rights. It provides secretariat and substantive services to United Nations bodies concerned with human rights questions, administers the programme of advisory services and technical assistance on human rights, and co-ordinates the relevant activities of the World Campaign for Human Rights within the United Nations system. It ensures liaison with Governments, non-governmental organizations, external institutions and the media, and is responsible for the collection, production and dissemination of human rights publications.

Further information: United Nations Centre for Human Rights, Palais des Nations, 8-14 avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Telephone: (4122) 734 60 11/731 02 11; telex: 289696; fax: 7339879; cable: UNATIONS, Geneva; or New York Office, Centre for Human Rights, United Nations Headquarters, New York, N.Y. 10017, USA.

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